

Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and the Pacific

Welcome remarks by Winston F. Garcia

Chairman, Philippine Social Security Association

President and General Manager, Government Service Insurance System, Philippines

Manila, Philippines, Wednesday 23 October 2009

First of all, I would like to thank the International Social Security Association for allowing us to become the host of this forum. We are grateful that you have entrusted us with this important task, and in keeping with the famous Filipino hospitality, we do our best not to disappoint our guests and the objectives of this forum.

The history of the social security in the Philippines is really a history of laws. These laws were instituted in response to the needs of the citizens as they changed through time. As people's needs changed, and as life became more unpredictable, there was a need to look forward further and further into the future, to anticipate needs and situations, and prepare for them in the present. The history of social security is therefore a history of how a country steels and braces itself for a future of possibilities, where good and bad things can and will happen, and where the only thing that is certain is the end of life.

Beyond the real and present certainty of death, there lies life and all that it embraces. The present is where one can make the future count. This is the thrust of all the Philippine laws governing social security and insurance.

The Philippine Social Security Association takes this sincerely to heart. And as we, the Social Security System (SSS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG), Employees Compensation Commission (ECC), AFP-Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and my very own institution, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), gather together with other social security institutions from across the world, we find other like-minded people and organizations, fellow visionaries in the field of social security reforms, and fellow innovators in strategic pension coverage.

As we discuss trends in governance, healthcare, and demographic ageing, among others, let us do so in the spirit of sincere service. As we pool our ideas together to come up with possible structures to help our clients to weather the financial crisis, let us do so with the conviction that this is what should be.

Welcome to this forum, and thank you for being here.